Cross-Party Group Annual Report. January 2018- Dec 2019 Cross Party Group on Disability

1. Group membership and office holders.

Chair - Mark Isherwood AM

Names of other Assembly Members Sian Gwenllian AM Lynne Neagle AM Michelle Brown AM

Secretary:

Zoe Richards, Learning Disability Wales 41 Lambourne Crescent Cardiff Business Park Cardiff CF14 5GG

Members:

Rhian Davies, Disability Wales Louise McGrath, Wales Council for the Deaf Owen Williams, Wales Council for the Blind Sara Mosely, Mind Cymru

2. Previous Group Meetings since the last AGM.

Meeting 1

The Cross Party Groups on Older People and Ageing,

Housing and Disability

Wednesday 17 October 2018

Conference Rooms C & D, Tŷ Hywel,

National Assembly for Wales

Minutes of Joint Meeting on Housing an Ageing Population

Attendees

Mike Hedges AM (Joint Chair) Mark Isherwood AM (Joint Chair)

Ryland Doyle, Mike Hedges' office David Melding AM, George Jones, Older People's Commissioner's office, Janet Finch-Saunders AM, Lynda Wallis, Vale 50+ Strategy Forum, Rhian Davies – Disability Wales, Valerie Billingham, Age Cymru, Louise McGrath – Wales Council for the Deaf, Callum Hughes, Welsh NHS Confederation, Zoe Richards, Learning Disability Wales, Matthew Dicks, Chartered Institute of Housing Cymru, Sandra Burton, Disability Can Do, Catherine May, Chartered Institute of Housing Cymru Adele Battaglia, Mark Wilson Iwan Williams, Social Care Wales, Claire Stevenson, Care and Repair Cymru, Tracey Blockwell, DAP Monmouthshire, Laura Lewis, CITB, Martyn Jones, Learning Disability Wales, Selina Moyo, CHC Alex Osmond, The Wallich, Pete Lomax, Housemark Michelle Brown, John Puzey, Shelter Cymru Travel Blockwell

Apologies: Huw Irranca-Davies AM; Bethan Sayed AM; Kirsty Williams AM; Ceri Cryer, Age Cymru; Maria Cheshire-Allen, Swansea University; John Davies, Active Wales; Juliet Morris, Care and Repair Cymru; Malcolm Williams, Social Care Wales; Matthew Kennedy, CIH Cymru; Phyllis Preece, National Pensioners Convention; Beth Winter, Swansea University; Sarah Hillcoat-Nalletamby, Swansea University; Geoff Cheetham, Welsh Senate for Older People; Cathrin Manning, Red Cross; Rachael Nicolson-Wright, Action on Elder Abuse; Michelle Wales, Shelter; Elinor Weekley, RICS; Nick Morris, Crisis; Jim Bird, Caerlas; Elin Edwards, RNIB; Neil Howell, Torfaen Council.

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Cross-Party Group on Older People and Ageing: Annual General

Meeting

Mark Isherwood AM proposed Mike Hedges AM as Chair; Mike Hedges wasduly elected. Val Billingham volunteered and was duly elected as secretary.

Joint Meeting on Housing an Ageing Population

Housing an Ageing Population-Prof Judith Phillips, Deputy Principal, Stirling University (JP), gave a presentation on Housing an Ageing Population. A copy of the presentation is attached.

Discussion took place, during which the following points arose:

- All stakeholders should be working to take this agenda forward, including Government, builders, developers and others;
- There are currently perverse incentives for developers to build homes which are not appropriate for older or disabled people, or only affordable by the better off. However, McCarthy and Stone are now looking at the lower end of the specialist housing market;
- Wales could be at the forefront of developing technological solutions to housing and social care problems. Under the Industrial Strategy, industry could help to future proof new housing stock;
- Home is a meaningful place, with emotional and social aspects; it is not
 just a question of bricks and mortar;
- Housing is now centre stage of the Government approach to health and social care. The Intermediate Care Fund sees housing as the solution to intermediate care issues. The Older People's Commissioner has a housing background;
- Any hypothecated social care levy could be used to invest in social housing;
- David Melding AM (DM) asked whether there had been any assessment
 of the gap between demand and supply of housing suitable for older
 people. JP said that no data was available. However, the issue was one
 of universal design and flexible housing to meet the needs of all
 generations;
- DM asked whether downsizing was a good option. JP said that more data was needed, but that it was a question of rightsizing rather than

downsizing, to accommodate, eg, live-in carers (or even somewhere to park a care robot) in later life. Older people need to be able to choose from all sorts of options. Many executive homes were built on the outskirts of towns and cities, not embedded within them, with access to their facilities;

 Lynda Wallis (LW) drew attention to the lack of council housing available for downsizing. JP said that councils could be introducing technological adaptations, eg, sensors, which would make existing council housing more fit for purpose;

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- JP said that the Development Quality Requirements (DQR) for Registered Social Landlords include standards for lifetime homes;
- there is no national policy to help with houses in disrepair. JP said that Wales needs incentives for innovative design, but no-one so far wants to look at this;
- Janet Finch-Saunders AM (JFS) said that it was often the case among her
 constituents that older people maintained their homes until one of an
 older couple died, after which the home was no longer maintained and
 the remaining person was not able to get into a supported living
 scheme. It was easier for the schemes to cream off the most able older
 people. JP said that the more disabled someone was, the safer and
 more cost effective it was for them to be in supported housing;
- Mark Isherwood AM (MI) said that the Homebuilders' Federation maintain that consumer preference is the driver for the type of houses that are constructed, and asked how we raise awareness in the public of the need to plan for later life. He mentioned that there are several "extra-care lite" schemes and asked whether there had been any work to see how and where good practice had been established and shared. JP said that this had been done in Scotland; there are a lot of groups who were desperate for housing, but was unsure that the market would respond to the need for lifetime homes without a statutory requirement. JP said that Wales was at the forefront of innovation in the construction industry;

 Matt Dicks asked about a rights-based approach to housing. JP said that there was a need to incentivise last-time buyers as much as first time buyers.

Adaptations and accessibility

Geraint Rees, Equality and Human Rights Commission in Wales, gave a presentation on Housing and disabled people – Wales's hidden crisis. A copy of the presentation is attached.

Discussion took place, during which the following points arose:

- Only one Local Authority in Wales had set a target for providing accessible, adaptable homes. In Scotland, fourteen of the sixteen lifetime homes criteria had been built in to building regulations, and a lot had been done in London to implement the criteria. The lack of data on the housing need of disabled people meant that LAs struggle to challenge developers. LAs have low confidence in their knowledge of their existing housing stock which leads to challenges in effectively matching disabled people to suitable homes;
- People living with disabilities have low confidence in their knowledge of tenants' rights and there is little support for landlords, the Commission was launching a guide for disabled people to outline their rights and a toolkit for LAs to improve decision making and practice
- Mark Wilson (MW) said that homelessness was often created by disability and ageing, but not many people realised this. There is a lack of development land suitable for housing in Cardiff and Vale. Many gypsy and traveller communities don't want houses. Should we offer people choices or not? Choice could lead to unintended consequences. Given the ageing of the population, should we change our philosophy? George Jones said that disabled people should be involved in the decisions leading up to the choices on offer;
- It is difficult to get landlords and lettings agencies to do adaptations.
 Ensuring that housing stock is adaptable and future proofed is essential to meet the needs of Wales' ageing population. People were being placed in private rental accommodation because there is so little housing stock available;

• Welsh Government was about to publish a framework for independent living. Housing for disabled people needed to be higher up the agenda.

Conclusion and action

MH and MI thanked everyone for attending and said that it was very important to have joint meetings which break out of traditional silos.

MI said that, all too often, a medical model of disability was applied to people need housing, but LA advocates and outreach workers often had no condition specific expertise themselves.

AMs then left the meeting to attend a plenary session, but encouraged attendees to continue the discussion. Discussion continued for a short time afterwards, and included:

- data about need is available on housing waiting lists;
- the organisations around the table were still disjointed in their approaches, and needed to come together outside the CPG to develop a combined approach;
- the three CPG secretariats agreed to work together to draw up key messages to put to AMs. This would include the Future Generations agenda and the economic regeneration;
- Disability Wales said that there was still a cookie-cutter approach to housing, and a lack of personalisation;
- there is a drive to get the housing sector represented on Regional Partnership Boards;
- there were concerns about the roll-out of Universal Credit and its impact on people and housing. The Older People's Commissioner is likely to do some work on it over the next few years.

Any Other Business

There was no other business.

Meeting 2.

Minutes of the

Cross Party Group on Disability Friday, 11th January 2019, Wrexham Glyndŵr University, Mold Road, Wrexham, LL11 2AW

Present: Carol Gardener, Jo Woodward, Tom Hall, Mark Davies, Eric Owen, Sorrel Taylor, Maureen Lee, Sharon O'Connor, Chris Roberts, Jayne Goodrick, Paul Johnson, Lynne Jones, Lynne Davies, Nathan Davies, Sandra Morgan, Bill Fawcett, Vince West, Laura Seddon, Lisa Pollard, Simon Green, Michelle Brown AM, Eluned Plack, Eluned's carer, Jacqui Hurst, Kathryn Shaw, Brian Harrison, Rhian Davies, Martyn Jones, Zoe Richards, Mark Isherwood AM, Gareth Davies, Rebecca Phillips.

Apologies: Llyr Grufydd AM, Jan Thomas, Helen Mary Jones AM, Rob Williams, Kathryn Jellings, Andrea Wayman, Stephen Ben Morris, Louise (WCD), Owen Williams, Glenn Page.

1. Welcome and introductions

Mark Isherwood AM welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Minutes of the last meeting.

The minutes were approved as an accurate record.

3. Presentations:

Rhian Davies - Draft Framework for Action on Disability

Rhian provided an overview of the Welsh Government's Draft Framework for Action on Disability. The document was created following a review of the Framework for Action on Independent Living, produced in 2013 to provide a strategic approach to independent living across Wales and to promote the social model of disability.

Disability Wales strongly believe that the Framework for Action on Disability should be under-pinned by the UN Convention on the Rights of Disabled People. Disability Wales worked with its partners in Scotland and Northern Ireland to produce a Manifesto for independent living and identified six calls to action:

- 1. Improved access to information, advice, independent advocacy and peer support services.
- 2. Availability of accessible and supported housing to meet individual requirements.
- 3. A comprehensive range of options and genuine choice and control in how social care and support is delivered.
- 4. Improved access to person-centered technology.
- 5. Barrier-free transport system that includes all forms of transport.
- 6. Enabling access, involvement and social economic and cultural inclusion of all disabled people.

There was a ministerial agreement to review the Framework for Action on Independent Living, three years on. This resulted in the Independent Living Steering group, comprising representatives from disability organisations across Wales, chaired by Rhian, to re-convene. The group reflected on what had been achieved since 2013. They recognised that whilst the introduction of the Framework was ground-breaking, progress on the ground was very slow and that national policy set by Welsh Government had not translated into local action. There was limited evidence in the change in culture, particularly by local authorities and local health boards in terms of taking on board a more rights-based approach to disabled people and to tackling barriers to independent living.

This was endorsed in 2017 during a Welsh Government consultation. The general feedback was that very little had changed in the lives of many disabled people and has even got worse which was also a key finding from the UN Convention on the Rights of Disabled People. The UN Committee in Geneva was very critical of the UK Government in that they had regressed in their local policies.

The steering group's aspirations for the revised version is that it should be much stronger in terms of the UN Convention of the Rights of Disabled People. The Convention should be at the heart of the new Framework with a stronger commitment to implementation of the social model of disability and more robust action in terms of how that is understood by people.

Rhian reported that the steering group took a strategic decision to align it with Welsh Government's own strategic plan, 'Prosperity for All' which has four key themes:

- 1. Prosperous and secure
- 2. Healthy and active
- 3. Ambitious and learning
- 4. United and connected

The steering group was of the opinion that there should be two documents. The main document, to set out the key commitments and principles for Welsh Government to abide by, plus a separate action plan that could be regularly updated and monitored with more specific detail about what different the Welsh Government departments would do in terms of delivery.

The action plan, which is currently out for consultation, links more closely to the articles of the UN Convention. In order to produce a response to the consultation, Disability Wales ran two events along with an online survey to gather the views of disabled people. The deadline for responses is Friday 18th January but there could be an extension. Rhian added that Alison Tarrant from Cardiff University has produced an interesting paper looking at independent living policy. The paper was

circulated to members prior to the meeting. The paper critiques the Framework for Action on Disability and a number of issues were identified.

Disability Wales and other members of the steering group have been calling for incorporation into the UN Convention for the Rights of Disabled People (UCRDP), giving it similar status to that of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Helen Mary-Jones AM is looking at how human rights can be incorporated in Wales.

Rhian noted that there is a disconnect between Welsh Government's principles and aspirations in relation to improving independent living for disabled people and the actual reality of accessing services and achieving their rights.

Rhian highlighted the importance of the CPGD submitting a robust response to the consultation with the aim of strengthening the new Framework to ensure it takes forward the rights of disabled people in Wales.

MI highlighted some of the findings from the study based on the Draft Framework for Action on Disability produced by Alison Tarrant of Cardiff University. These included the absence of 'Advocacy', which was previously identified in the 2013 Framework as one of the highest priorities. In addition, the 2013 Framework was constructed around a series of priorities identified by disabled people. The foregrounding of the priorities and expertise of disabled people has been removed. MI suggested these be considered when submitting a response.

Nathan Davies - Wales Independent Living Grant

Nathan shared a video with the group, titled 'Save WILG Campaign'. The video highlighted the issues faced by more than 1300 recipients of the grant. On March 31st, Welsh Government plan to close the Welsh Independent Living Grant (WILG) and transfer the funds to the Local Authorities. The funds will not be ring-fenced. The video, features an insight into Nathan's condition, Friedreich Ataxia, a progressive disease of the nervous system. Nathan states that in order to be a productive member of society, he requires the help and support from personal assistants, funded by WILG. Without the grant, his care will be reduced from 86.5 hours per week to 31 hours per week. Back in April 2018, at the Welsh Labour Conference, a motion was passed to save WILG. However, this has not been acted upon yet. The Campaign has gathered political support from across the spectrum and still Welsh Ministers and some civil servants refuse to listen to the evidence collected. Nathan is particularly concerned that the money being given to Local Authorities has not been ring-fenced.

Nathan's strength and campaigning has been recognised by the Wrexham Glyndwr University who have made him an honorary fellow.

To highlight the issues surrounding WILG, Nathan is running a series of campaigns across social media to influence a positive decision.

Mark Isherwood AM invited questions and comments.

Questions / Comments:

In relation to WILG, Rhian informed the group that Nathan and the BBC made a Freedom of Information request. It emerged that only two-thirds of people have been assessed and although some had their packages maintained and some increased, a significant number had their hours cut. There were circa 17 instances of clients taking legal action against their local authority. In response to the Freedom of Information outcome, Huw Irranca-Davies AM agreed to examine this further to establish whether the issues solely related to Wrexham or whether the problem was more widespread. Rhian suggested the CPGD write to the new Minister, Julie Morgan AM for an update.

The importance of disabled people needed better access to lawyers was raised.

Mark Isherwood AM stated that the Equality and Human Rights Commission will occasionally fight a trial case to establish a precedent. The CPGD could submit a request if there was a particular matter that needed to be tested in court. He added that Welsh Government do not have control over Legal Aid but it is still worth highlighting any concerns and to ask what support they can offer to better access legal advice.

Various sources of legal services were identified and will be circulated following the meeting. Disability Wales also have a guide on their website offering advice and information called 'Know Your Rights, Use Your Rights, Live Your Rights'.

Concerns were raised around the lack of proper planning and services available for the increasing number of children with disabilities which will result in their needs not being met.

A member asked why Welsh Government has decided not to follow Scotland or Northern Ireland in terms of how they manage the Welsh Independent Living Grant if there is evidence to prove the system is working well in those areas.

Mark Isherwood AM suggested Disability Wales seek data from Disability Scotland to identifying the positive impact the grant has had on recipients of the grant. The Chair welcomed further comments from the floor. Learning Disability Wales gave an update their work. In December Learning Disability Wales held its first ministerial advisory group meeting, chaired by Gwenda Thomas AM. The main focus was the Children's Commissioner's 'Dont Hold Back' report, investigating children

and young people's experience of transition across various policy areas. Martyn also informed members that Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) has been consulting on a document around commissioning services and are looking to hold a national conference around it. Public Health Wales are working with LDW on a conference on reducing restrictive practice with the Education Minister. The Equality and Human Rights Committee are about to start a piece of work around access to courts to support disabled people to fully engage in the system.

Rhian added that Disability Wales are working with Women's Aid to establish the accessibility of refuges. A survey has been produced and will be circulated. The results will be compiled soon and asked whether it would be an opportunity hold a joint meeting with the Party Group on Violence against Women and Children to share the findings.

Mark Isherwood AM welcomed a joint meeting with the Cross Party Group on Domestic Violence.

Date of the next meeting:

Zoe Richards will circulate the date of the next meeting, to be held in Cardiff.

Actions:

- 1. CPGD to produce a response to the Framework for Action on Disability consultation document and seek an extension to the deadline of the 31st January.
- 2. Zoe to share the link to Nathan Davies' campaign video to members.
- 3. CPGD to write to Julie Morgan to summarise concerns and seek an update in relation to the issues identified following the Freedom of Information request.
- 4. Disability Wales to seek data from Disability Scotland to support the evidence around the positive impact of WILG on Scottish recipients.
- 5. Circulate an email requesting responses to the consultation.
- 6. Circulate Women's Aid and Disability Wales' survey.

Meeting 3.

Joint Cross Party Group on Disability and Cross Party Group on Violence against
Women and Children

Wednesday 1st May

Ty Hywel

12 noon – 1.30pm

Chaired by Mark Isherwood

In attendance: Elinor Crouch-Puzey, Zoe Richards, Natasha Hirst, Samantha Williams, Miranda Evans, Simon Green, Lizzy Fauvel, Tina Reece, Hilary Watson, Bethan Sayed AM (Co Chair), Sarah Keef, Mandi Glover, Vicky Snook, Helen Mary Jones AM, Melissa Wood, Gwendolyn Sterk, Sophie Weeks, Bethan McMinn, Sian Davies, Gauri, Heather Kiltie, Julie Richards, Iwan Williams, Sian Vining, Paul Hossack.

Apologies: Helen Jones AM, Fflur Emlyn, Sara Flay, William Fawcett, Wendy Ashton, Jane Ruthe, Lynne Ryan, Llyr Grufydd AM, Ann Dann, Office of the Future Gen Comissioner, Shahien Taj OBE, Emmy Chatwer.

Presentations

The agreed purpose of the meeting is to launch the report: Supporting disabled people experiencing violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence in Wales. To acknowledge that current systems and programmes don't always understand the higher risk for disabled people and to hear the recommendations.

Tina Reece, Head of Engagement offered an introduction to WWA in Wales and highlighted the 2015 legislation which is unique to Wales. It outlines that Local Authorities have a duty to prevent and that is an important aspect of the legislation.

Following a piece of work previously done by Disability Wales and Cardiff University in 2011 this was an opportunity to re-visit that and push forward with new opportunities.

Elinor Crouch-Puzey led us through the key findings of the report:

They key findings from the report included:

- There was limited data available on the prevalence of domestic abuse experienced by disabled women in Wales, which is needed to inform domestic abuse policy and practice.
- Survivors felt they were sometimes perceived to lack credibility when seeking domestic abuse support from statutory bodies.
- One of the emerging themes was a dissatisfaction with the police response when reporting abuse. This also emerged in the 2011 report.

- There were inconsistent levels of engagement and probing about abuse by primary care services (i.e. GP, A&E) when disabled women sought support for violence against women.
- There was a lack of accessible information on domestic abuse in a range of formats.
- There were inconsistencies in response to domestic abuse provided by statutory bodies.
- There was limited access to accessible housing as well as an unavailability of safe, emergency accommodation that met the access requirements of disabled women
- Only 33% disabled survivors had been referred to or had accessed a specialist VAW service.
- Limited capacity and resources was highlighted as a key barrier by service providers, which prevented them from making adjustments to the built environment to improve physical access to benefit disabled survivors of abuse.
- Despite limited resources, Welsh Women's Aid members highlighted actions they have taken to maximise support for disabled survivors.

Miranda Evans talked through the recommendations:

Informed by survivors' and specialist services feedback, Disability Wales and Welsh Women's Aid makes the following key recommendations based on this survey (further recommendations are at the end of this report):

- We call for the incorporation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Disabled People (UNCRDP) in Welsh policy and legislation. The UNCRDP specifically refers to the multiple discrimination faced by disabled women and calls for appropriate governmental measures to ensure the full development, advancement and empowerment of women (Article 6). It also states the right of disabled people to freedom from exploitation, abuse and torture both within and outside the home (Article 16). The UNCRPD should be fully recognised and implemented through policies and services to tackle violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence.
- Agencies should work to identify disabled survivors and their experiences of abuse as early as possible, through enquiry, and ensure staff are trained to understand and know how to mitigate and reduce the specific barriers to disclosure for disabled people.
- Agencies need to recognise the specific forms which violence against disabled women may take.
- Accessible information on violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence to be available in a range of formats.
- Publicity campaigns aimed at tackling domestic abuse to include disabled people and diversity across different forms of impairments in different communities, recognising that disabled people aren't a homogenous group
- Publicity and materials to include messages that mitigate and challenge victim-blaming myths
- Agencies should routinely record and report information about survivor and perpetrator characteristics i.e. gender, age, sexual orientation, ethnicity,

immigration status, and disability – to focus attention on what agencies need to be doing better and how they should adapt to needs rather than expect people to adapt to them.

A survivor then presented a video of her experience and talked about how her disability was used against her in the context of abuse and coercive control. Such as controlling her access to communication devices and undermining her memory of events by suggested she didn't hear things properly.

Samantha Williams talked about the need for early education for women with a learning disability to understand healthy relationships. She talked about particular issues with:

- Levels of understanding what a healthy relationship is
- Not being in control of their lives
- · Being vulnerable and therefore targeted
- Not having accessible information
- Not being believed
- · Restricted social circles

Questions and comments:

There is now an Easy Read resource available from CDAS developed in partnership with Carmarthenshire People First.

Iwan Williams asked if there are consistent challenges from around Wales or are there regional variations?

Eli answered that there have always been issues around rurality.

Bethan Sayed AM questioned the outcomes from the Chris Wade case and if the report deals with the institutionalised perspective.

Simon Green raised the point that for a lot of disabled people they do not recognise what abuse is in order to report it.

Gauri raised a substantial point around the role of early education in healthy relationships. Sian Davies asked how many of those who responded to the survey were people with a learning disability?

Actions

 To write to the Ministers for Housing, Health and Chief Whip to request meetings

- To write to the four PCCs for Wales to request meetings regarding the police response
- To write to the Equality, local government and communities committee, the Children and Young People Committee and Health, Social Care and Sport Committees and request the report is considered as a future agenda item.
- To send the report to all AMs and request they take forward the recommendations in their work

AOB

A 5 minute presentation was given by Bethan McMInn about a project called Oshi's world

Detail can be found here: https://www.oshisworld.org/

Mark thanked those for attending and the support shown for the report.

3. Professional lobbyists, voluntary organisations and charities with whom the Group has met during the preceding year.

Rhian Davies, Disability Wales

Nathan Davies, Wales Independent Living Grant Campaign

Tina Reece, Welsh Women's Aid

Arthur Beechey, Agoriad Cyf

Prof Judith Phillips, Deputy Principal, Stirling University

Geraint Rees, Equality and Human Rights Commission in Wales

Annual Financial Statement. Cross Party Group on Disability

Report on finances for 2019

The Wales Disability Reference Group (WDRG), whose membership is **Wales Council for Deaf People**; **Disability Wales**; **Wales Council of the Blind**; **Mind Cymru**; **Learning Disability Wales**, received a Third Sector Partnership Council (TSPC) Partnership Capacity Building Fund for this period of £3,500. The grant supports member organisations of WDRG to meet and report on a number of work streams including the work of the Cross Party Group on Disability (CPGD). WDRG meets regularly and sets the agenda for the CPGD. There were 3 CPGD meetings for this period.

Expenditure of the Cross Party Group:

Catering	2332.00
Venue costs	£143.00
Total	C67E 90
Total	£675.80

This expenditure was covered by each of the 5 members of the WDRG from their allocated Capacity Building Fund.

In-kind contributions:

Catarina

£532.80

£575.00
£1,480.00
£2,055.00